

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

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DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

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SUBJECT: GOI COMMENTS ON AVAILABILITY PL-480 TITLE I COMMODITIES

REFS: A. JAKARTA 11826 B. STATE 198706 C. STATE 195425

1. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS EARLIER THIS WEEK BASED ON WASHINGTON DATELINE AP STORY THAT THE US WILL BE UNABLE TO PROVIDE FOOD AID TO INDONESIA FOR THE REMAINDER OF 1973 DESPITE EARLIER US PLEDGE TO HELP THE GOI WITH A FAIR SHARE OF ITS NEEDS HAVE BROUGHT ON SEVERAL GOI DENIALS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM MINISTER OF INFORMATION MASHURI AND AMBASSADOR THAJEB FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO JAKARTA FOR CONSULTATION. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS BOTH OFFICIALS SAID US IS "STILL CONSIDERING" THE PROBLEM AND THAJEB SUGGESTED THAT US SURPLUS FOOD WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE. IMPRESSION CONVEYED BY PRESS REPORTS ON US FOOD AID HAS THEREFORE SHIFTED FROM IMPLICATION THAT US HAS VIOLATED COMMITMENT TO GOI TO AN OVER-
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OPTIMISTIC AND INACCURATE ASSESSMENT THAT

US SURPLUS RICE WILL STILL BE AVAILABLE.

2. AMBASSADOR THAJEB WAS QUOTED IN OCTOBER 12 PRESS REPORTS AS SAYING FOLLOWING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SOEHARTO THAT US STATE DEPARTMENT INFORMED HIM THAT THERE WILL BE SURPLUSES OF FOOD IN THE US AND THEREFORE, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO HELP INDONESIA AND THAT THE US HAS PROMISED TO KEEP ITS FOOD AID TO INDONESIA IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS IGGI UNDERTAKINGS. THAJEB'S COMMENTS FOLLOWED THOSE MADE BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION MASHURI A DAY EARLIER, WHICH ALSO HELD OUT HOPE FOR US FOOD AID. THAJEB DID ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AMOUNTS OF US FOOD AID FOR INDONESIA WAS STILL UNDER STUDY AND WILL DEPEND UPON US SUPPLIES, WORLDWIDE DEMAND, AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS IN OTHER COUNTRIES; BUT THESE QUALIFICATIONS WERE NOT SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO NEUTRALIZE THAJEB'S MAIN POINT, I.E., THAT THERE WILL BE US SURPLUS FOOD AVAILABLE THIS YEAR. STATEMENTS OF MASHURI AND THAJEB ARE BAFFLING TO US IN VIEW OF REPEATED AND UNEQUIVOCAL STATEMENTS WE HAVE MADE TO GOI THAT PROSPECTS OF ANY PL 480 RICE AND WHEAT ARE BLEAK THIS YEAR.

3. MEANWHILE, WE ARE CONTINUING TO STRESS TO GOI PRIVATELY BLEAK FACTS ON PL 480 SUPPLIES AND PROVIDING BACKGROUND MATERIAL TO PRESS. WE ARE ALSO PROVIDING FACTS TO FOREIGN EMBASSIES WHICH HAVE CALLED ABOUT PRESS REPORTS. THUS FAR, PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTS HAVE LACKED ADEQUATE PERSPECTIVE ON DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PL 480 SURPLUS FOOD AND COMMERCIAL SALES AND HAVE NOT STRESSED THAT US RICE REMAINS AVAILABLE THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS. NOR DO THEY PROVIDE MUCH BACKGROUND ON WORLDWIDE NATURE OF FOOD SHORTAGE. AP STORY DREW LINK BETWEEN ALLEGED WITHDRAWAL US FOOD AND US NEED FOR INDONESIAN OIL. USIS IS ISSUING ALL AVAILABLE BACKGROUND MATERIALS ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOOD CRISIS TO LOCAL MEDIA, BUT ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FROM WASHINGTON WOULD BE VERY USEFUL.

4. WHAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IS THE AMOUNT OF COMMERCIAL PURCHASE THAT MIGHT BE MADE FOR RICE AND WHEAT BASED UPON OUR LATEST WARNING CITED REF C. RECENT PRESS REPORT THAT BULOG HAS MADE PURCHASES OF UP TO 1 MILLION TONS OF RICE HAS GEN.

ARIFIN PARTICULARLY CONCERNED SINCE NONE OF HIS
INQUIRIES FOR RICE PURCHASES ARE SURE SALES.
WILL CONTINUE TO REPORT ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS
THESE MATTERS.
GALBRAITH

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